

1-11. (CANCELED)

12. (NEW) A method of operating an automatic transmission of a motor vehicle, the method comprising the steps of:

carrying out a downshifting during a compression braking operation which continues up to attainment of a predetermined threshold speed and terminated by engagement of a clutch located between a vehicle drive motor and the transmission, and

when the downshifting is at a speed less than the predetermined threshold speed, terminating the downshifting by disengagement of the clutch.

13. (NEW) The method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of carrying out the downshifting only during a continually disengaged clutch, if a reasonably great probability exists that a driver has a desire for positive drive torque as well as desiring uninterrupted travel.

14. (NEW) The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of determining the desire for positive drive torque by an indicator.

15. (NEW) The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of indicating the desire for positive drive torque by one or more of,

releasing operative brakes,

deflecting an activation lever for a direction of travel, and

using a steering angle of the vehicle steering mechanism.

16. (NEW) The method according to claim 15, further comprising the step of determining a driver's desire for positive drive torque by way of overstepping of the steering angle as compared to a predetermined steering angle.

17. (NEW) The method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of using, for a determination of the probability of the driver's wish for a positive torque, two or more of named indicators or other indicators in common.

18. (NEW) The method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of preventing the compression downshifting if operational brakes are activated.

19. (NEW) The method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of engaging the clutch for termination of the compression operation only when a power control member of the motor vehicle is activated.

20. (NEW) The method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of always terminating engagement of a starting gear of the automatic transmission at the end of the compression phase with a disengaged clutch.

21. (NEW) The method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of selecting gear jumps during the transmission downshifting during a compression phase with dependence on vehicle deceleration.

22. (NEW) The method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of operating the transmission in an automatized shifting manner.